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Office of the
Dean of Students

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Emily Perlow
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Chair, Greek Life Task Force
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Dear Emily,

It is with great pleasure and much appreciation that I write to you as confirmation of my acceptance and approval of the final report, recommendations and implementation plan of the Greek Life Task Force Report. I am impressed with the scope and depth of the report and the thoroughness of the committee's work. In addition, I am deeply grateful for the commitment and hard work of the task force members, the leadership of the committee chairs, and especially your work and stewardship as chair.

I wanted to provide a brief overview of some of my specific comments regarding the recommendations of the task force. After reading the report several times, I began to look more closely at the specific recommendations from each of the committees. Since each committee worked independently of each other, the final recommendations for each were made without full awareness of the outcomes of the other committees. When considered together, I believed that the cumulative scope of all the recommendations combined was unrealistic and would be too burdensome for any individual chapter to accomplish. As a result, we have worked to adjust some of the requirements in such areas as required programs and workshops so that the expectations were more realistic.

Because of the breadth of the task force recommendations, I appreciate the recognition on the part of the various committees that each chapter was going to be in a different place in relationship to the recommendations. To that end, the recommendations were designed to capitalize and improve upon individual chapter's strengths and address areas of concern. We shared a collective concern over how the various recommendations would be implemented. I appreciate the additional work that you completed this fall to flesh out the implementation plan for the approved recommendations of the task force. I believe that the timeline and steps that you have developed as part of the Chapter Excellence have demonstrated sensitivity to the unique strengths of each chapter, while striving for excellence for the Greek system as a whole. The points and recognition system that you developed as part of the Chapter Excellence plan provide encouragement and motivation to improve, without being overly punitive to chapters who need to strengthen in particular areas. Finally, I appreciate the fact that the point system is integrated into the annual Greek Recognition Awards planned in partnership with the Greek Alumni Council. From having been part of judging the Greek Recognition Awards in the past, I am aware that the awards can sometimes be somewhat subjective. This correlation between the Chapter Excellence Plan and Greek Recognition awards is a positive step towards validating the chapters as they strive for excellence in their individual chapters.

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As we have discussed, change can be difficult to implement and I believe that the implementation plan is realistic in its scope and timeline. In this sense, I believe that the implementation plan is evolutionary, rather than revolutionary. In this same spirit, one of the areas of greater concern for me in reading through the recommendations centered on the work of the Governance committee. The work of the committee was outstanding and the recommendations were the best developed and most thorough of any of the committees. At the same time, the recommendations regarding the proposed changes to the governance structure of the Interfraternity Council were very revolutionary and would necessitate dramatic changes in the organization. Because IFC is a student organization, and thus, is self-governing, it is essential that they are active partners in the restructuring of their own governance system. Forced change without buy-in can sometimes lead to disastrous results. I am aware that the foundations for these changes have already been put into place, but it will take a longer period for the organization to completely transform itself to the proposed structure of the Governance committee, which is the reason for recommending a longer timeline for implementation in this area.

On a related note, the recommendations of the Governance Committee regarding the proposed judicial branch of the Interfraternity Council need further study. There are many layers to the judicial system when it involves alleged violations that involve members of Greek chapters. Individual students may face charges through the Dean of Students office for alleged violations of the WPI Code of Conduct and individual chapters might face charges for alleged violations of the WPI Code of Conduct or the Relationship Statement. In addition, IFC might hold a chapter accountable for violations of IFC regulations, and there may be an internal response from within a chapter and/or their National. The complexities of the interrelationships of these various potential judicial responses have historically been a source of confusion and frustration. Since every situation is different, the judicial response from the various agencies may also be different from case to case. After studying the recommendations for the proposed judicial revisions, I believe that there is still some confusion over the relationship between the proposed Interfraternity Council judicial system and the WPI Campus Judicial System in regards to both jurisdiction and process. For all of these reasons, further study of this recommendation is warranted.

Emily, let me re-emphasize my gratitude for the work of the Greek Life Task Force. The process was grounded with clear objectives, and the established committee structure was both comprehensive in scope and inclusive of the variety of constituents both within and external to the Greek system. Through articulating the objectives of Greek Life at WPI, each committee helped establish outcomes that provided both the roadmap for the work of the task force and the final destination. Each committee, under the guidance of the chair, completed thorough research of both the best practices and areas of weakness, and developed thoughtful recommendations to improve and strengthen the Greek system as a whole. Finally, your leadership of this initiative has been exemplary. I look forward to the realization of the vision of the Greek Life Task Force. Through encouraging and fostering excellence in individual chapters, Greek Life will continue to remain a vital part of WPI's rich history.

With sincere gratitude,

Philip N. Clay
Dean of Students